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**Faster Than a Gentrifying Locomotive**

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**Faster Than a Gentrifying Locomotive**

**by**

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**Professional Report**

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

**Master of Science in Community and Regional Planning**

**The University of Texas at Austin**

**August 2018**

## **Dedication**

To all the Black communities who feel unheard in their plight for equitable public transit solutions. To my mother, Mechelle Lizette Register for being my support system from day one of kindergarten to my final day of gradate school. To my father, Gregory Gary Grant to show him that we are not defined by and can rise above the trauma that we have experienced as young Black males in America.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to acknowledge God, Paul Adams, PhD for helping me begin my initial journey into planning; Kelly Porter, AICP for inspiring me to write about reparations; Veronica O. Davis, PE for taking the time to talk to me about ideas for recommendations; and my two readers Gian-Claudia Sciara, PhD and Alex Karner, PhD for working with me through this process.

## **Abstract**

### **Faster Than a Gentrifying Locomotive**

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The Maryland Transit Administration plans to implement two new light rail transit (LRT) stations in Langley Park, Maryland as part of the Purple Line route. Langley Park is a majority Latinx, low-income community. Property values have been known to increase in communities within a quarter mile of transit stations. Property values increasing has shown to be one of the causes for community residents being priced out of housing and communities gentrifying due to demographic turnover from non-white (often times Black) residents to white residents. The report explores the connection between LRT implementation and the vulnerability of a community to gentrification as a result of new development that follows the public investment in physical infrastructure. Gentrification, disinvestment, and displacement are defined. The impacts of LRT on gentrification are explored. Case studies are examined to explore the impacts that similar communities have experienced. A Susceptibility Tool Kit was utilized to analyze Langley Park's susceptibility to gentrification. Recommendations are made for planners involved in the implementation process of the Purple Line.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **Black and Brown Communities Are Targets**

A common theme for disinvestment, gentrification, and ultimately displacement is that these processes tend to happen in communities that are majority Black and Brown more often than not. This is not by accident. The acts of discrimination based on race and ethnicity through systemic disinvestment in communities is part of a long history of oppression through the social construct of white supremacy in America. White supremacy has revealed itself in various ways throughout the planning process and housing industry. A key example is the Federal Housing Administration practicing housing discrimination against Black and Brown families all the way up until The Fair Housing Act of 1968 and even then, unlawful discrimination persisted.

These discriminatory practices are part of a long history of racial oppression in America targeted at non-white people, specifically Black people. This discrimination, following years of mistreatment at the hands of Jim Crow laws and the Transatlantic Slave Trade before that, has hindered Black community members in accumulating wealth in this country. It has allowed white Americans to progress economically and financially at an unfair rate. This uneven advantage was the result of profiting off of forced labor from the backs of enslaved Africans as well as employment discrimination barring Black and Brown people from generating sustainable income. These practices over the years are part of the larger social and systemic construct of white supremacy and the abuse of a capitalistic economy.

A long history of discriminatory practices as a result of white supremacy lead me to believe that the community will be impacted by the same practices used on two other communities I will be examining, the Albina District in Portland, Oregon and Rainier Valley in Seattle, Washington. Both communities have a historically Black and/or Brown demographic and now that demographic is being disproportionately impacted by public investment of physical infrastructure because of a history of racial discrimination that has economically disadvantaged it. I highlight these bigger picture issues as concerns to give explanation for why there should be concern for a low-income, majority minority community such as Langley Park, Maryland being targeted for the implementation of two new LRT stations as part of the new Purple Line.

This report is meant to examine the connections between public investment in physical infrastructure such as, light rail transit (LRT), and the acceleration of gentrification in predominantly Black and minority communities. According to Chapple, “No research to date has explicitly examined the relationship between transit investment and gentrification” (Chapple 2009 p. 2). This is a gap in transportation and gentrification research I seek to fill.

In this professional report, I will define gentrification, displacement, and disinvestment. Then I will explain the impacts of public investment in LRT on low-income, predominantly minority populated communities who mainly utilize rental housing. It is important to talk about these concepts because the purpose of this report is to explore connections between the processes of public investment in physical infrastructure, specifically light rail, and its impact on demographics of communities.



The specific impacts I am interested in examining are changes in racial composition of communities, socioeconomic status, educational attainment, and median income in response to public investment in LRT. I expect that LRT may contribute to neighborhood turnover from predominantly minority to white, and a transition to residents with higher levels of socioeconomic status, educational attainment, and income. I have chosen these factors because they are indicators that help define whether a community is gentrifying or not.

In particular, I will examine the conflicting arguments surrounding the the positive or negative impacts of public transit investment on low income communities in Langley Park, Maryland, Rainier Valley in Seattle, Washington, and the Albina district of Portland, Oregon. These specific communities were chosen because they represent communities at different stages of impact from public investment in LRT. Albina is in the latest stage of impact and gentrification has already taken hold, its older residents who are predominantly Black have left the community due to either displacement or accepting buyouts from developers. Rainier Valley is in the moderate stage because it has not yet experienced displacement on the level that Albina has. However, it is becoming gentrified as a result of development following the implementation of an LRT system. Finally, Langley Park is a community that is essentially primed for gentrification and racial turnover because of its socioeconomic composition and susceptibility to gentrification as a community. I hope to produce a relatively accurate assessment of Langley Park and its current level of susceptibility to gentrification and displacement if LRT impacts it similarly to Rainier Valley and Albina. The professional report will ask

the question question, “How can we implement light rail public transit without worsening the effects of gentrification on an already gentrifying or at risk for gentrifying community?”

I will draw upon decennial census, American Community Survey, and GIS data to evaluate the current status of Langley Park. I will then examine its characteristics as an at-risk community by using a gentrification susceptibility tool kit developed by Karen Chapple to measure how likely it is to gentrify and whether or not the implementation of the Purple Line could accelerate the process of gentrification. I will utilize scholarly journals, news articles, and reports from non-profit organizations to illustrate a history of disinvestment and gentrification as well as the impacts of light rail on the communities of Albina and Rainier Valley. Including these cases is important because they showcase real world impacts of public investment on a predominantly low-income minority population who relies heavily on rental housing. The specific public investment I am interested in is light rail implementation.

This report is intended to inform planning professionals, public officials, and advocacy groups in communities with similar demographic, socioeconomic, and housing characteristics. My hope is that this research is of value and will aid in more inclusive planning in the future that does not influence the displacement of low-income Black and Brown people. Questions I want to answer are: In general, what have other communities in the United States experienced when public entities cyclically disinvest in them and the reinvest with public infrastructure? What usually leads a community down this road of gentrification and displacement? In particular, I ask, how might public investment in

light rail public transit be an accelerant for the process of gentrification and ultimately lead to displacement in Langley Park? What can Langley Park learn from the Albina district and Rainier Valley, and how can this knowledge be a resource? How can transit equity become a reality in Langley Park?

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

The literature review researched news articles online and used them as a barometer of the community climate for all three communities: Albina, Rainier Valley, and Langley Park. Scholarly journals and articles were used for the majority of the review. The scholarly journals were used in order to provide a history of gentrification, displacement, and disinvestment as concepts as well as how they took place in the three community case studies. This review defines and discusses the concepts of gentrification, disinvestment, displacement, and transit investment & gentrification. A thorough understanding of these concepts is key to comprehending the described happenings that influence community changes. Having a clear comprehension of gentrification, displacement, and disinvestment is key to this study in understanding how light rail transit can have an effect on a community. Light rail brings developers and attracts new residents that usually do not have socioeconomic characteristics that resemble those already living in a community. It is important to examine the impact on a community that has been disinvested in and then experiences a series of events such as disinvestment, reinvestment, gentrification, and ultimately displacement as a result of public investment in physical infrastructure.

Gentrification and displacement are inaccurately used interchangeably. It is important to know what is necessary for one process to happen. The two terms are capable of being mutually exclusive. One can happen without the other, however, one tends to happen a result of the other. I am specifically referring to displacement being an occasional, not immanent, outcome of gentrification. While learning the true definition

of these concepts, understanding the origin or the steps that create the opportunity for these processes to take place is important as well. One precursor to the process of gentrification leading into displacement is disinvestment. Disinvestment is important because it is an indication of targeting being taken place. Disinvestment is essentially one of the priming practices that take place before a community becomes fully gentrifiable.

### **Defining Gentrification**

Gentrification is a hot topic that comes up in many contemporary discussions involving urban planning practices. Its consistent presence in talks stems from the debate over whether it is beneficial or detrimental to communities, and also shows the lack in consistency of its definition. Many scholars and planners have used different definitions for various reasons including changing ideas of what gentrification includes. Gentrification in America usually involves the change of a community's demographic make up from majority non-white to majority white, low-income to middle class economic status, low educational attainment to higher levels of collegiate education. These communities transform from underinvested to prioritized in municipal reinvestment.

Other definitions varied because of rebranding done by policy makers in order to continually mask what is actually happening. The definition also morphs because based on the individual studying the process. Hosford defines gentrification as, "the process by which middle class, relatively educated, and (usually) majority white individuals move into economically depressed, typically Black, neighborhood and create economic and

housing improvements” (Hosford 2009 p. 2). Bates adds to the discussion by describing gentrification of having the characteristics of, “housing market changes, economic status changes, and demographic changes in a neighborhood that alter its character” (Bates 2013). Slater suggests that the changing definitions and terms have obscured what the true intent or mode of change is when performing gentrifying practices. He elaborates by saying, “Gentrification as a concept and political rallying cry has been in many places swept away by an alliterative garble of revitalization, renaissance, regeneration, renewal, redevelopment, rejuvenation, restructuring, resurgence, reurbanisation, and residentialisation – terms that bolster a neoliberal narrative of competitive progress that carves the path for ever more stealth forms of gentrification” (Slater 2009 p. 294). Slater found it interesting how both in the US and UK, the term “gentrification” is rarely explicitly used to describe the prescribed method of redevelopment by legislators when drafting new policy. The word was replaced by other terms in policies as well as advertisements to attract new comers to communities. Examples were “homesteading”, “brownstoning”, “whitewalling”, or “red-brick chic”.

Jen Douglas examines in her study how the early stages of the American gentrification cycle began with suburbanization and disinvestment in urban residential areas during the 1920s and ‘30s. Suburbanization affected Park Slope, a historically Black community in New York City, when the white middle class moved to the then-suburb, Flatbush, during the mid 1960s. Once the whites who had the means to relocate had moved out of the urban core that was Park Slope, systemic disinvestment began. The brownstones left behind in Park Slope became rooming houses during the great

depression and over time were either closed or left to deteriorate or in disrepair by the landlords. Park Slope became a slum yet retained its high rent rates. This suburbanization happened in two waves, the second between 1940 and 1970. The phenomenon was called “White Flight”. This is what occurred when the white residents left the urban center to purchase home in new suburban developments. Families utilized the new federal mortgage programs to buy homes with little to no down payments. This was all happening as more and more Black and Latino people move into the urban centers like Park Slope.

### **Defining Disinvestment**

Disinvestment can be seen as a lubricant for gentrification. For gentrification to advance, “the existing residents must be ‘gentrifiable,’ such as tenants who cannot lay an ownership claim [to housing], people who may be marginally employed, or low-paid (factors related to withdrawal of a prior industrial base and low wage work in the service economy), or elderly people” (Douglas 2016 p. 16).

Disinvestment is a part of a cycle of state violence that enables gentrification and displacement. State violence is the act of a policy or agent of the government, local, state, or federal, that systemically impacts a community or person in a negative way. State violence can be committed by any public agency that intervenes in a community, city, state, nation, or even globally. For example, the discriminatory pieces of legislation created by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) were a major factor in the disinvestment of a majority Black or minority community and could be/have been identified as acts of state violence. One tool of disinvestment adopted by the FHA was,

“a system of maps that rated neighborhoods according to their perceived stability” (Coates 2016 p. 8). These maps were used by banks and home loan agencies to identify communities not approve for loans. Disinvestment usually precedes the other gentrification and displacement as a tactic that weakens the community. Gentrification usually befalls urban communities that have been previously primed with systemic disinvestment. This in turn creates exploitive opportunities for profitable redevelopment where the desires of developers and political giants are fulfilled at the expense of “[u]rban residents affected by work instability, unemployment, and stigmatization” (Slater 2011 p. 572).

Disinvestment is a practice used by municipal bodies where the resources and funding funneled into a community are removed. Karen Gibson defines it as “the systemic withdrawal of capital (the lifeblood of the housing market) and the neglect of public services such as schools; building, street, and park maintenance; garbage collection; and transportation” (Gibson 2007 p. 5). This is a piece of the larger cycle of state violence that affects Black, brown, and low-income communities. As Douglas finds, “Analysis of the historical record reveals that today’s displacement and gentrification are part of processes of investment, disinvestment, and uneven development in the neighborhood, with settlement patterns that reproduce differences of class, ethnicity, and race” (Douglas 2016 p. 35). The removal of resources and funding leads to a decline in the quality of residential and public use structures. This decline in quality creates a buyer’s market for those looking to reinvest in the community and make a profit. (Freeman 2007 p. 40-42)



Gibson observes that cycles of *devalorization* continuously work to create a buyer's market in five stages:

- “New housing construction and first cycle of use;
- Transition to landlord control;
- Blockbusting;
- Redlining; and
- Abandonment” (Gibson 2007 p. 5).

In the first stage of the cycle new housing construction takes place and the first cycle of use begins. Next, owners will move away after the new housing ages, in some cases to avoid repair costs. The migration of owners then increases the proportion of renters to owners. Remote landlords may decide to pocket money instead of using rent to pay for repairs on the second stage. This neglect of property can be occasionally rational economically. However, this adds to the dilapidation of the property. “The transition to landlord control may or may not include the third stage, blockbusting, but often involves a process of racial succession, or rapid population turnover” (Gibson 2007 p. 5). In the process of blockbusting, realtors use scare tactics to pressure white residents into selling their homes below market value or risk racial turnover, conceding demographic dominance to Black people, and a decline in property value. The realtor will then turn around and sell the property to Black home buyers at inflated prices. Redlining is the fourth stage which results in a reduction in owner occupied housing and burdens absentee landlords looking to sell a property that was no longer wanted. This leads to a further decline of homeownership and even more dilapidation. The final stage of the cycle is

abandonment. Sometimes property owners incapable of selling will resort to arson to cash in on the insurance payout of their building. Thomas Slater describes the result that came of disinvesting in a community in New York City by stating, “Systemic disinvestment locked the neighborhood into a spiral of economic decline and devalorization, resulting in physical deterioration and residential abandonment” (Slater 2011 p. 574).

Redlining played a large part in the cycle of devalorization. Redlining was a practice of the FHA that severely disadvantaged Black families in their attempts to build generational wealth through property ownership, providing a clear example of state violence. It served as an example of how banks and systemic oppression from the government worked together to keep Black residents from building wealth through property. Redlining is a practice that was carried out by a “sub-agency of the Federal Housing Administration” (Farquhar 2012 p 25). Sub-agencies were the subsidiary agencies of the FHA carrying out its policy on a local government level. Redlining is the term used to describe when a property or neighborhood is assigned the worst investment rating by the sub-agency. Redlining gets its name from redlines literally being drawn on property maps to identify them. It was used as a barrier against landlords or homeowners investing in the existing residential structures. “Redlining meant that neither landlords or nor homeowners could get federally insured bank funding for housing in Black neighborhoods” (Farquhar 2012 p. 25).

Coates explains how the ramifications of redlining proliferate throughout the housing industry and are not limited to the actions of the FHA in his op-ed *Case for*

*Reparations.* Coates writes, “Redlining went beyond FHA-backed loans and spread to the entire mortgage industry, which was already rife with racism, excluding Black people from the most legitimate means of obtaining a mortgage” (Coates 2016 p. 8). The lack of funding lead to dilapidated housing units becoming common and little to no incentive to keep them in good shape or up to code. This was then what agencies called “blighted”. Blighted was a term to describe particular communities that were to become subject to “state powers of eminent domain in order to repurpose the space for an improved public use” (Farquhar 2012 p. 27).

### **Defining Displacement**

In some spaces, displacement is mistakenly used interchangeably with gentrification. However, the two phenomena are not one in the same. Displacement is a resulting act of gentrification. According to Thomas Slater, there are four examples of displacement that happen in communities. *Direct Last-Resident Displacement* (DLRD). DLRD “can be physical (e.g. when landlords cut off the heat in a building, forcing the occupants to move out) or economic (e.g. rent increase)” (Slater 2009 p. 303). *Direct Chain Displacement* (DCD) is defined by looking “beyond standard ‘last resident’ counting to include previous households that ‘may have been forced to move at an earlier stage in the physical decline of the building or an earlier rent increase’” (Slater 2009 p. 303). *Exclusionary Displacement* (ED) “refers to those residents who cannot access housing as it has been gentrified/abandoned.” (Slater 2009 p. 303). Gentrified housing is inaccessible due to its higher property value that raises rent prices and makes them unaffordable to the current community members. The abandonment creates a deficit of

affordable housing due to reducing the supply of livable housing stock. Residents of communities are displaced through gentrification because of higher rents and being priced out of neighborhoods due to property tax increases that are transferred to tenants from landlords trying to make up for increased financial expenses. The final type of displacement is *Displacement Pressure* (DP), referring “to the dispossession suffered by the poor and working-class families during the transformation of the neighborhoods where they live” (Slater 2009 p. 303). This comes in the form of resources and frequently patronized businesses disappearing from a community. It also shows up as a community resident’s neighbors moving away. A resident will feel the pressure to leave due to them not being supported by their community establishments any longer. Businesses that will support those who are supposed to be attracted to the new developments will not be representative of those who currently live in the community. An example would be a tanning salon in a majority Black or Latinx community. Also, seeing one’s neighbors leave periodically will give the sense of a community deteriorating with less and less familiar or relatable people around.

Displacement shows up not only in the form of people actually being forced to leave the community, but also in the way the community character itself changes. Ruth Glass states in her introduction for *London: Aspects of Change*, “Once this process of ‘gentrification’ starts in a district, it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working class occupiers are displaced and the local character of the district is displaced” (Glass 1964 p. xvii-xix).

Defining the terms gentrification, disinvestment, and displacement sets the stage for the rest of this study. The linkage between transit infrastructure investment and its role in gentrification is key to the selection of the case studies presented here. The three chosen cases are the Albina District in Portland, Oregon, Rainier Valley in Seattle, Washington, and Langley Park, Maryland. Each of the cases have either experienced, are currently experiencing, or are susceptible to experience gentrification and then displacement. The three cases share a history of majority Black or minority population. Albina and Rainier Valley have experienced disproportionate socioeconomic changes in conjunction with the implementation of light rail transit, respectively the Interstate MAX and Sound Transit. Langley Park will be impacted by light rail in the near future once proposed light rail stations as part of the Purple Line reach completion. By exploring these concepts within the first two cases, this report aims to educate and explore the results of public investment in physical infrastructure so that the third may have a chance at not experiencing negative impacts as severe as the previous two.

### **Transit Investment and Gentrification**

Gentrification studies often focus on private entities as major actors, developers for instance. However, the public sector plays a pivotal role in the process of gentrification as well by investing in “physical infrastructure such as rail transit, schools, parks, and highways as well as neighborhood-based organizations” (Zuk et al. 2015 p. 17). There is not a substantial amount of research focusing on how investments like these impact community demographics. However, Zuk writes about the surplus of research that covers the linkage between transit investment and property values, “which is

intimately tied to the social status of the people who live there” (Zuk et al. 2015 p. 18). In the next section, I review the research relevant to the discussion of public investment and its impacts on community demographics, specifically investment in light rail transit.

### **Light Rail and Gentrification**

Light rail transit (LRT) operates to provide public transportation services to community members while utilizing a rail based right-of-way. LRT is important to this discussion because of its effect on the surrounding communities that are located near transit stations. Hess writes, “The relationship between a transit system, the location of transit stations and property values are, in theory, fundamental to land markets and urban structure” (Hess 2006 p. 1041). This is made possible due to the fact that “public transit provides access to central business districts, employment locations, healthcare, schools and colleges and entertainment and recreation, and thereby increases accessibility to an entire region through which a transit system traverses” (Hess 2006 p. 1041). This added accessibility is a valuable commodity that developers are eager to exploit when developing new structures that neighbor transit stations. In simple terms, residential prices increase the closer a structure is to transit stations and a central business district (CBD). Structures immediately adjacent to stations are usually of lower value due to noise and inconvenience from congestion as well as possible higher crime rates. However, properties that radiate out from the transit station while maintaining a walkable distance, are likely to have higher property values. Chapple shares these sentiments by writing, “Gentrifying neighborhoods are nearly twice as likely to be located within one-half mile of transit than any other kind of neighborhood” (Chapple 2009 p. 5).

Belzer et al. writes about the impacts of light rail being near neighborhoods with large minority populations in her study, *Preserving and Promoting Diverse Transit-Oriented Neighborhoods*. Neighborhoods near existing or planned transit may be susceptible to gentrification because they generally have above-average populations of renters, Blacks, Hispanics, and low-income households (Chapple 2009). Neighborhoods like these have in the past often opposed transit investment, specifically transit oriented development that impacts the communities located within the neighboring areas of transit stations. This stems from feelings of exclusion in the planning process as well as from concerns that policies may be unfairly targeting specific areas for redevelopment. Rayle writes, “A policy permitting new development only in certain transit-accessible areas – and limiting development elsewhere – would likely increase housing prices in those areas” (Rayle 2014 p. 542). This speaks to how developers follow the implementation of light rail transit and thus impact those who live in the area because their communities are targeted for development while others are not.

### **Chapter 3: Case Studies**

I began identifying my case studies by doing a preliminary internet search for communities with prominent rail systems as part of their public transit infrastructure. In order to specify further, I narrowed down the search from the previous results to communities with substantial populations of Black residents or residents of color. Based upon my research, it is more common to see Black people or people of color experience the negative effects of gentrification, disinvestment, and displacement. Once completed with the narrowing of my search, I landed upon the two communities of the Albina District in Portland, Oregon and Rainier Valley in Seattle, Washington. These two were chosen because in planning, they tend to be the idolized blueprint for public transit in the united states. Another point of interest was the fact that these were two communities that had already begun to experience or were already experiencing gentrification while being home to a light rail transit line that I believed could accelerate the issue.

Since these communities were already experiencing the negative effects of gentrification and displacement with light rail being a possible accelerant, I wanted to find a community with a similar demographic make up that would possibly suffer the same fate if not consciously planned for. This search led me to Langley Park, Maryland. Langley Park will soon be home to two new transit line stops as part of the new Purple Line owned by the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA). The rail line is a 16.2-mile light rail line projected for completion in 2022.



In choosing the Albina and Rainier Valley, I wanted to show two stages of gentrification accelerated by light rail. Albina and Rainier Valley are examples of what could happen to Langley Park as LRT construction progress. If the actors who play a role in the planning of the Purple Line, such as MTA, are not diligent in monitoring the impacts being made by the construction of the Purple Line stations in Langley Park, the community could progress to a stage of gentrification similar to Rainier Valley.

Rainier Valley has experienced disinvestment coupled with being home to a large minority population that lives in majority rental housing. Rainier Valley is an intermediate stage that if not carefully monitored and maintained, it could progress in to the advanced stage that the Albina District is experiencing. Albina is the latest stage of gentrification impacted by light rail of the three and is in experiencing displacement. My goal was to showcase the three communities in stages of “Advanced” (Albina), “Intermediate” (Rainier Valley), and “At Risk” Langley Park. The goal of using this community for focus of the analysis is that I cannot fully or truthfully know what will happen. However, experiences of Albina and Rainier Valley can provide cautionary examples of how a lack of proper monitoring and community assessment can lead to gentrification and then displacement as a result of public investment in physical infrastructure.

### **Langley Park, Maryland**

Langley Park fits all the criteria of a community that is at risk of becoming gentrified with the possibility of its community members facing displacement. It is a community with a high minority population that lives in mostly rented housing. The

Purple Line coming to this community could very well have negative impacts similar to those mentioned above. The people in the community are less likely to have the resources such as access to lobbyists or the proper knowledge about planning processes to defend themselves against the implementation of plans that are not inclusive or conscious of their needs.

Further, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) has plans to implement a new light rail called the Purple Line that will include two rail stations located in Langley park. *Figure 1* is a map of the proposed route for the Purple Line.

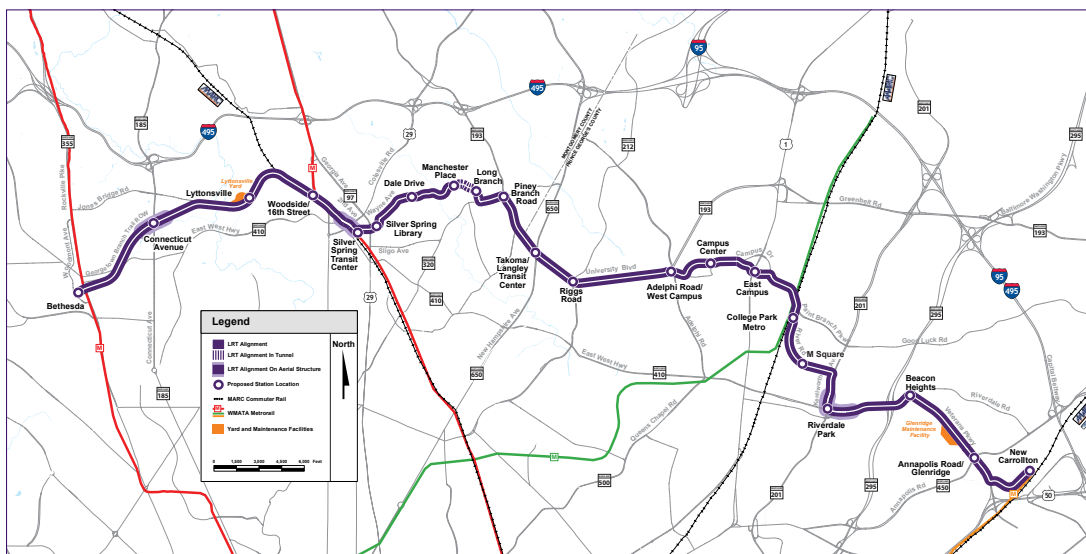


Figure 1: Map of Proposed Purple Line Route (Purple Line MD)

As Chapple's study finds in the light rail section, if a neighborhood is gentrifying it is almost twice as likely to be located within one-half a mile of a transit station compared to other neighborhoods that are not gentrifying. Chapple's conclusions give me concern for Langley Park because of its socioeconomic demographic make up that

makes it vulnerable to gentrification according to Douglas’ definition of “gentrifiable”.

Langley Park’s vulnerability leads me to believe that the implementation of the Purple

Line will accelerate the process of gentrification in the community.

Langley Park is an unincorporated community in Maryland located on the northwest corner of Prince George’s County. The population is largely Latinx compared to the remainder of the community. *Table 1* represents Langley Park’s demographics as of 2016 compared to that of Prince George’s County from American Census Survey (ACS) data, showing the three census tracts in the community/neighborhood.

	Langley Park		Prince George’s County	
Total Population	18,131		897,693	
Not Hispanic or Latino:	2,891	16.0%	747,425	83.3%
White Alone	428	2.4%	122,505	13.7%
Black or African American Alone	1,897	10.5%	562,034	62.6%
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone	49	0.3%	2,039	0.2%
Asian Alone	342	1.9%	37,801	4.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone	0	0.0%	241	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	27	0.2%	2,563	0.3%
Two or More Races	148	0.8%	20,242	2.3%
Hispanic or Latino:	15,240	84.1%	150,268	16.7%

Table 1: Racial Breakdown of Langley Park compared to Prince George’s County (ACS 2016)

The majority of the population in Langley Park is Latinx and over half of the non-Latinx residents are Black. 68,000 undocumented immigrants call Prince George’s (PG) County home, according to Lung-Aman 2017. Langley Park residents also have low education

levels in comparison with Maryland residents. Only 36.8% graduated high school or higher, and only 10.3% graduated with a bachelor's degree or higher.

Langley Park's educational attainment is severely lower than that of the rest of the state of Prince George's County. The state's percentage of population with some college or more (64.2) is alarmingly identical to Langley park's percentage of population with less than a high school education (64.1%). The majority of Langley Park does not have any education above the high school level. This displays an existence of an educational disparity that the community faces. *Table 2* is a table showcasing a full comparison of Langley Park's educational attainment for the population 25 years of age and older compared to that of PG County as a whole.

	Langley Park		Prince George's County	
Population 25 Years and Over:	11,763		597,885	
Less than High School	7,545	64.1%	84,814	14.2%
High School Graduate or More (Includes Equivalency)	4,218	35.9%	513,071	85.8%
Some College or More	1,871	15.9%	358,385	59.9%
Bachelor's Degree or More	894	7.6%	188,060	31.5%
Master's Degree or More	153	1.3%	80,200	13.4%
Professional School Degree or More	30	0.3%	18,333	3.1%
Doctorate Degree	8	0.1%	9,489	1.6%

Table 2: Langley Park and Prince George's County Highest Educational Attainment for Population 25 Years and Over (ACS 2016)

23% of the Langley Park renters makes less than 30% of the median income and 33% make 31-50% of the median income (MDOT 2016). When comparing Langley Park's median income to the rest of PG County, there is a stark difference in the what quality of life seems to be for the community. There is nearly a \$20,000 gap between the total

median incomes. *Table 3* is a side-by-side comparison of Maryland’s median income as a whole versus that of Langley Park.

	Langley Park	Prince George’s County
Median Household Income (In 2016 Inflation Adjusted Dollars):	\$58,633	\$75,925
White Alone Householder	\$58,480	\$80,693
Black or African American Alone Householder	\$40,777	\$76,524
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone Householder	\$1	\$59,112
Asian Alone	\$61,559	\$79,785
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone Householder	N/A	N/A
Some Other Race Alone Householder	\$62,210	\$60,853
Two or More Races Householder	\$1	\$80,131
Hispanic or Latino Householder	\$63,127	\$61,809
White Alone Householder, Not Hispanic or Latino	\$41,145	\$86,690

Table 3: Langley Park and Prince George’s County Median Household Income (In 2016 Inflation Adjusted Dollars) (ACS 2016)

As quoted in the disinvestment section from Douglas’ study, *From Disinvestment to Displacement: Gentrification and Jamaica Plain’s Hyde-Jackson Squares*, demographic characteristics like these are examples of what makes a community vulnerable and “gentrifiable”. In order for gentrification to advance, the existing residents must be ‘gentrifiable,’ such as tenants who cannot lay an ownership claim to the housing they live in, people who may be marginally employed, or low-paid (factors related to withdrawal of a prior industrial base and low wage work in the service economy), or elderly people. It will be a “vulnerable population,” often low-income people of color, with less relative ability to garner political support for their housing community needs (Douglas 2016 p. 16). Langley Park’s demographics align with all of

these attributes relative to the remainder of PG County. I foresee the coming LRT serving as a possible accelerant of gentrification and possibly displacement.

### **Rainier Valley**

A second community I would like to highlight as a possible foreshadowing of what could transpire in Langley Park, post Purple Line, is Rainier Valley in Seattle, Washington. Rainier Valley is important because it is a community that is experiencing a demographic shift in race that Langley Park could experience in the near future. Rainier Valley is on the southeast region of Seattle and is known for being “the most racially diverse area in the Puget Sound” according to a report conducted by the Puget Sound Sage. Rainier Valley was one of the first communities in Seattle to receive light rail stations once it was completed in 2009. The Link light rail shown in *Figure 2* has 13 stops on the Central Link light rail, and it reaches from SeaTac Airport to Downtown Seattle, passing through Rainier Valley on the way.

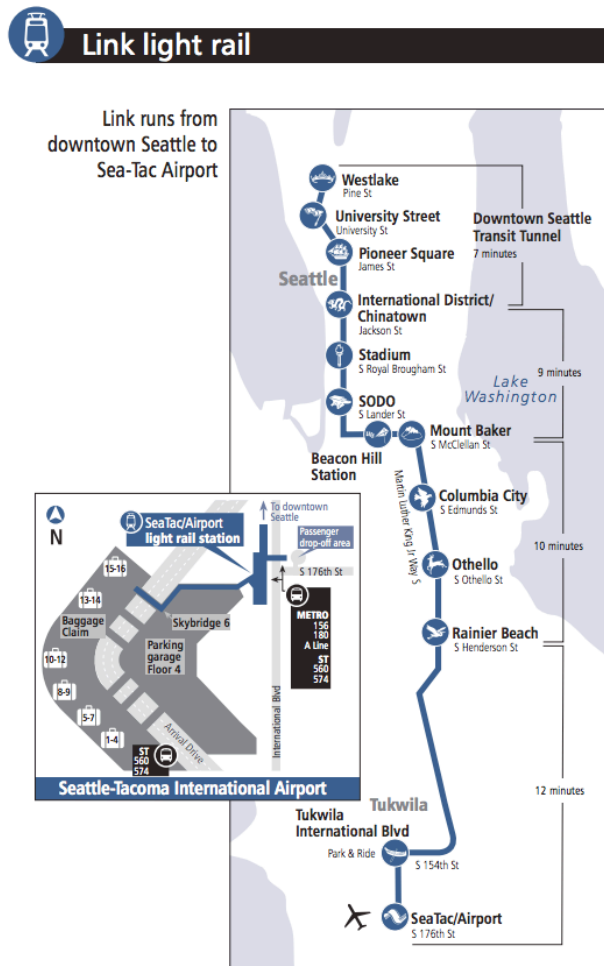


Figure 2: Link Light Rail Line (Sound Transit)

Public and private investments have begun to find their base in the community that has for some time experienced under investment. From the outside this may seem like something great and economically positive. According to Greenwich, “[h]owever, many local leaders are deeply worried that Rainier Valley will be next on the list of displaced communities,” (Greenwich 2012 p. 3). This concern appears well founded. According to a report by the Puget Sound Sage, a local policy nonprofit advocating for low-income people and communities of color, Rainier Valley is home to the few

communities in Seattle where people of color make up the majority of the population. People of color compose 64% of the Rainier Valley population but only 34.3% the Seattle population as a whole. *Table 4* is a representation of the racial demographic breakdown of Seattle and Rainier Valley based upon 2016 ACS survey data.

	Seattle		Rainier Valley	
Total Population	668,849		50,443	
Not Hispanic or Latino:	624,981	93.4%	45,558	90.3%
White Alone	439,485	65.7%	18,148	36.0%
Black or African American Alone	46,533	7.0%	11,400	22.6%
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone	3,414	0.5%	183	0.4%
Asian Alone	93,979	14.1%	12,150	24.1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone	2,600	0.4%	387	0.8%
Some Other Race Alone	1,534	0.2%	115	0.2%
Two or More Races	37,436	5.6%	3,175	6.3%
Hispanic or Latino:	43,868	6.6%	4,885	9.7%

Table 4: Seattle and Rainier Valley Racial Demographics (ACS 2016)

Since 2000, there has been noticeable change in the demographics of the Rainier Valley community. The disproportionate contrast in growth rates between Seattle and Rainier Valley are indicators of gentrification and displacement taking place. *Table 4*, *Table 5* and *Table 6* show the dramatic change Rainier Valley has experienced within a decade compared to that of the entire city of Seattle and King County as a whole.



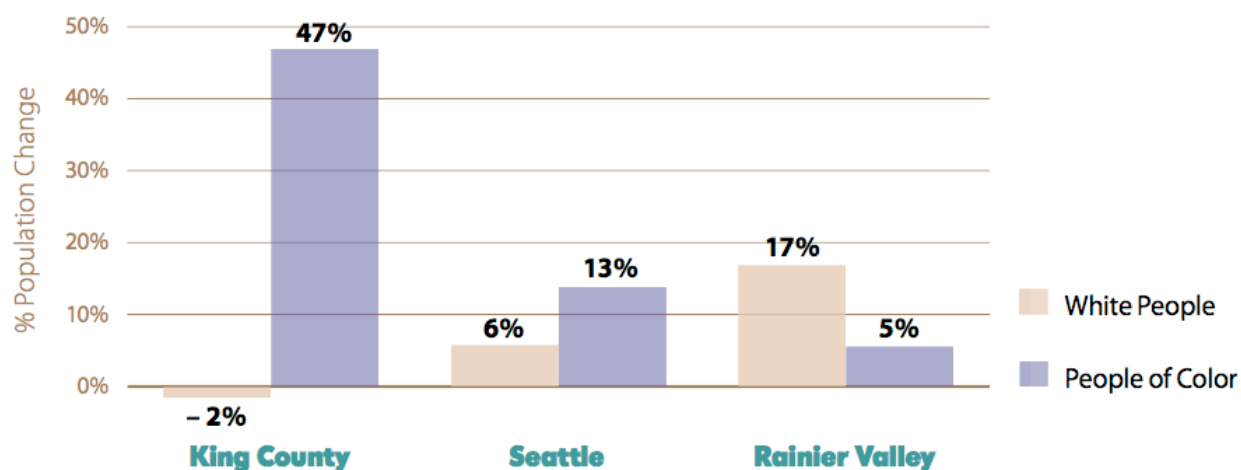


Table 5: Race and Ethnicity Change in Rainier Valley Dramatically Different than City and County, change from 2000 and 2010 (Table A) (Greenwich 2012 p. 8)

	White			People of Color		
	2000	2010	% chg	2000	2010	% chg
King County	1,275,127	1,251,300	-2%	461,907	679,949	47%
Seattle	382,532	403,578	6%	180,842	205,082	13%
Rainier Valley	10,857	12,660	17%	41,027	42,965	5%

Table 6: Race and Ethnicity Change in Rainier Valley Dramatically Different than City and County, 2000 and 2010 (Table B) (Greenwich 2012 p. 8)

Rainier Valley is at a stage of gentrification that could soon be accelerated by the Link light rail system that was installed in 2009. Rainier Valley's population changes by race are running contradictory to that of Seattle and King County. Much like Albina in Portland, OR, Rainier Valley has already been experiencing racial demographic changes and the new economic investments and development could become the next wave of change that is amplified by the presence of a light rail system. These new investments attract jobs and people of more affluent status to communities, reflected in rising median

income for White Alone Householders. *Table 7* showcases the increase in median income for White Alone Householders and non-Black non-white householders while there is a decline for Black or African American Householders.

	Rainier Valley 2000	Rainier Valley 2010	Rainier Valley 2015
Median Household Income (In 2015 Inflation Adjusted Dollars):	\$46,139	\$55,684	\$62,499
White Alone Householder	\$52,124	\$79,093	\$84,332
Black or African American Alone Householder	\$41,108	\$36,770	\$34,015
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone Householder	\$14,722	\$22,364	\$9,726
Asian Alone	\$46,234	\$51,095	\$55,743
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone Householder	\$36,716	\$78,592	\$17,708
Some Other Race Alone Householder	\$44,315	\$59,258	\$44,189
Two or More Races Householder	\$40,842	\$44,549	\$60,422
Hispanic or Latino Householder	\$40,125	\$45,377	\$41,372
White Alone Householder, Not Hispanic or Latino	\$52,283	\$79,931	\$90,467

Table 7: Median Household Income by Race (Census 2000) (ACS 2010 & 2015)

The Link light rail line coming to Rainier Valley brought with it, “both the promise of new investment and, for some, the threat of economic dislocation,” Eric de Place writes. He continues, “The new light rail line is, of course, hardly the sole driver of change in the Rainier Valley, but it serves as a useful orientation because it is particularly tangible, recent, and significant” (de Place 2012). The Puget Sound Sage has presented proof that the transit line is causing rents to increase which could lead to displacement in the future. “Since 2005, land values surrounding Southeast Seattle’s

light rail stations have risen by over 50%” (Greenwich 2012 p. 10). Some stations along the Link light rail have experienced substantial land value increases for example the Othello station. Greenwich writes, “Property values at Rainier Valley stations that have seen new development grow even more; for instance, assessed land value at the Othello station appreciated by 513% between 2004 and 2011” (Greenwich 2012 p. 10). The increases in property values are causing communal shocks to areas that had not been experiencing consistent investment in the past. Shocks come in the form of investments being made in communities that have been historically disinvested in. Greenwich writes, “increasing property values in historically under-invested areas strongly signal the potential for new development, which generally creates much more expensive housing” (Greenwich 2012 p. 10).

### **Portland Oregon: The Albina District**

I use the case of the Albina district in this report to illustrate to planning professionals and policy makers how Langley Park may be at risk for becoming gentrified after the implementation of the Purple Line. Gibson writes in her study, *Bleeding Albina: A History of Community Disinvestment, 1940-2000*, about how the Albina district has a deep-rooted history of disenfranchisement of its Black population. Albina at one time was predominantly Black. However, due to processes of disinvestment, gentrification, and displacement, it has experienced a racial turnover from predominantly Black to white. Albina has experienced gentrification and displacement in conjunction with the investment of public infrastructure. The first time was in the 1960s where the Federal Aid Act of 1956 had plans for the construction of Interstate 5 and

Highway 99. Both of these highways ran straight through Albina, demolishing 476 homes in Oregon's largest Black community, Albina, in the process. The Interstate Metropolitan Area Express (MAX) Yellow Line is one of the factors I believe contributed to this issue of gentrification in Albina.

Albina is a community on the northwest side of Portland Albina is composed of 8 neighborhoods: Elliot, Irvington, Lloyd, Boise, Humboldt, King, King-Sabin, and Woodlawn. Albina is an example of what happens when the local government continuously disinvests in a community until it reaches a level of devalorization that prompts reinvestment by building physical infrastructure. In Albina's case, light rail was the chosen form of physical infrastructure. New public investments are attractive to outside developers that capitalize on the devlaorized community at the expense of the low-income Black and brown people renting in the area. The focus of Albina is the impact that the implementation of the Yellow Line has had on the community in combination with the long history of disenfranchisement.

The Yellow Line one of the several Interstate MAX lines that are managed by the Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon (TriMet), the public transportation agency serving Portland, Oregon. It runs 5.8 Mi. from North Portland to the city center. Its construction process spanned from November 2000 to May 2004 and officially opened May 1, 2004. There are 10 stations along the line and it cost \$350 Million. Its construction was funded by the Federal Transit Administration, regional transportation funds, TriMet capital funds, and urban renewal funds. There were no

additional property taxes required. *Figure 3* is a map of the yellow line as it progresses through Portland from the Expo Center to Portland State University.

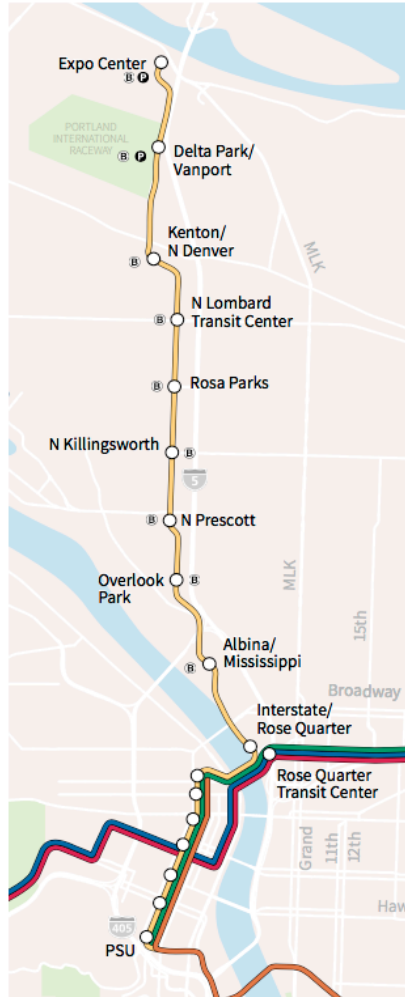


Figure 3: Interstate MAX Yellow Line (TriMet)

Portland's current Black population is 5.7% of the city. "Although the population is very small (never comprising more than 7 percent of the city and 1 percent of the state), Portland provides an interesting case study of a Black community that found itself suddenly in the path of urban redevelopment for 'higher and better use' after years of

disinvestment” (Gibson 2007 p. 3). Investors want to occupy land in a central city that is seeking to take advantage of population growth and an increase in economic productivity. Gibson gives an in-depth history of how the Black communities in Portland were shrunk down in size after residents began to leave and/or were priced out until the neighborhoods were merely fractional memories of what they used to be. In Albina, the completion of the Interstate MAX was partially responsible for the demographic shift that changed Albina from having a predominantly Black population, to a predominantly white population. In order to understand that process, it is important to learn about the historic processes of urban development and political forces that aid in the removal of Black businesses and residents, specifically in Albina.

Albina did not reach its heightened stages of decay and dilapidation all on its own. There is strong supportive evidence in the city pointing to housing market actors that helped the district wither away, “making the area ripe for reinvestment” (Gibson 2007 p. 6). Key components of this process included: “systematic denial of mortgage capital, which was justified by appraisals devaluing African American neighborhoods; predatory lenders, speculators and slumlords played a strong role in keeping Albina residents from accumulating wealth through homeownership, and in some cases cheated residents out of their equity investments and earnings” (Gibson 2007 p. 6). Systemic denial of mortgage capital involved the refusal of approving Black residents for mortgages and home loans. This was part of the extensive segregation process that kept Black families out of white neighborhoods and restricted them to certain areas of cities. “Realtors, lenders, and government guarantors widely promoted the use of restrictive

covenants (mutually agreed upon by builders, realtors, bankers, appraisers, insurers, and residents) that forbade non-whites to own property in specific areas” (Gibson 2007 p. 5). This disproportionate treatment from the housing industry helped perpetuate the problem of economic inequality in Portland.

The housing discrimination was part of process that continued throughout the city for decades was termed “ghetto-building”. Historian, Stuart McElderry describes this process as happening in three phases: first, from 1910-1940; next, the 1940s; and finally, the 1950s. McElderry detailed the phases as follows:

- “First, between 1910 and 1940, more than half the Black population of 1,900 was squeezed into Albina by the real estate industry, local government, and private landlords who restricted housing choice to an area two miles long and one-mile-wide in the Eliot neighborhood.
- The second phase occurred in the 1940s, when roughly 23,000 Black workers who migrated to Portland for work in the shipyards were restricted to segregated sections of defense housing developments in Vanport and Guild’s Lake and to the Eliot and Boise neighborhoods in the Albina District.
- During the third phase in the 1950s, when defense housing was demolished by flood and bulldozer, Blacks funneled into the Albina District” (McElderry 2001 p. 136-145).

During these phases, Albina's Black community was shuffled around like a deck of cards as results of various events in the city of Portland's history. Two key events helped form the Black community in Albina: The World War II labor migration and the 1948 flooding of Vanport City. During WWII, Portland served as a port city for the military's Pacific front. The military created a multitude of factory jobs that aided the armed forces. Many Black families moved to Portland in hopes of attaining one of those jobs. Vanport, at the time, was the nation's largest wartime development. It was flooded when the dike retaining the Columbia River broke. This flood displaced many and pushed them to find a new home, which became Albina.

After the flood, whites began to leave Albina to head to the suburbs and Black families moved into the temporary war housing available in the district. As more Black families moved in, white families moved out. For the next 50 years, from the 1940s, this pattern of white flight would continue and repeat itself with each of Albina's eight neighborhoods. During the 1940s and 50s, the Black community had mostly converged upon the lower end of Albina. They were soon forced to relocate after urban renewal and highway construction began in the 1960s and 70s. The Black community moved to the north side of the district into Upper Albina. *Table 5* showcases the movement of the Black community population trends from 1960-2000.



		Percent Black				
	Census Tracts	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
<b>Lower Albina</b>						
Eliot	22.01	<b>69</b>	50	35	38	58
	22.02	<b>72</b>	54	43	41	25
	23.01	65	<b>77</b>	62	58	41
Irvington	24.01	14	<b>43</b>	38	33	23
Lloyd	23.02	<b>54</b>	45	28	25	20
<b>Upper Albina</b>						
Boise	34.02	67	<b>84</b>	73	70	50
Humboldt	34.01	40	65	<b>69</b>	<b>69</b>	52
King	33.01	21	61	<b>63</b>	<b>63</b>	54
King-Sabin	33.02	31	62	<b>64</b>	58	43
Woodlawn	36.01	12	36	49	<b>62</b>	51

Table 8: Black Population Trends in Albina District Neighborhoods, 1960-2000 (Gibson 2007 p. 8)

The bolded numbers indicate each neighborhood's peak point in population as the communities were shuffled around. The process of urban renewal made it difficult for the Black communities to establish roots and a good foundation for themselves. "Urban renewal brutally disrupted various aspects of residents' lives: economic, social, psychological, spiritual. It disrupted their attachment to place and community. It forced them to start over, often without adequate compensation" (Gibson 2007 p. 14).

In the 1980s, things continued to fall apart for the community of Albina due to redlining and disinvestment. After years of bleeding the community from disinvestment and pulling resources, Albina had begun to hit rock bottom. It suffered from issues of "economic stagnation, population loss, housing abandonment, crack cocaine, gang warfare, redlining, and speculation" (Gibson 2007 p. 17). Black families, who had the capability, moved out and those that did not were forced to stay and bear the consequences of this troubled district.

As the 1990s hit, things began to shift once more. "For the first time in 50 years, the population of Albina grew. The pattern of racial transition was reversed, as whites

reclaimed the housing they had left decades earlier, enticed by the Victorian housing stock, affordable prices, and reinvestment efforts the city had been making” (Gibson 2007 p. 20). During the 90s, the city had begun putting focused effort into revitalizing the district of Albina. The city created an urban renewal district boundary line and focused its efforts on the Albina district which included the breaking ground of a light rail project on Interstate Ave. Local nonprofits contributed to the revitalization by “developing and rehabilitating tax-foreclosed properties” (Gibson 2007 p. 6). The revitalization successfully primed Albina for reinvestment from developers. This led to an economic boom and other problems, unfortunately.

The boom increased home prices for the city. “A booming economy, cheap mortgage money, bargain basement property and pent-up demand coincided to transform the pockets of Albina in three or four years from very affordable, to out of reach” (Gibson 2007 p. 21). No longer was abandonment the overarching issue; instead, a shortage of affordable housing had emerged as the new problem for Albina. With the economic boom came more white homebuyers, reducing the available housing stock for Black families. By 1999, percentage of homes owned by Black families had dropped by 36% while percentage of homes owned by white families had risen 43% since the late 1980s. “During the 1990s, residential segregation between Blacks and whites in Portland decreased so sharply that it ranked tenth nationally among metropolitan areas with greatest declines. Ironically, although desegregation partly reflects gradual opening up of the housing market, it also reflects the displacement of Black renter to suburban locations because of gentrification” (Gibson 2007 p. 4).

The percentage of homes owned by whites increased from a low of 44% to 61% in a matter of ten years. This increase led to a rise in percentage median housing values for the city from 58% to 71%. The swift rebounding of the community after the influx of white homebuyers revealed a continuing correlation between property values and race. *Table 6* showcases the increase in median home values for the Albina Neighborhoods from 1990 to 2000.

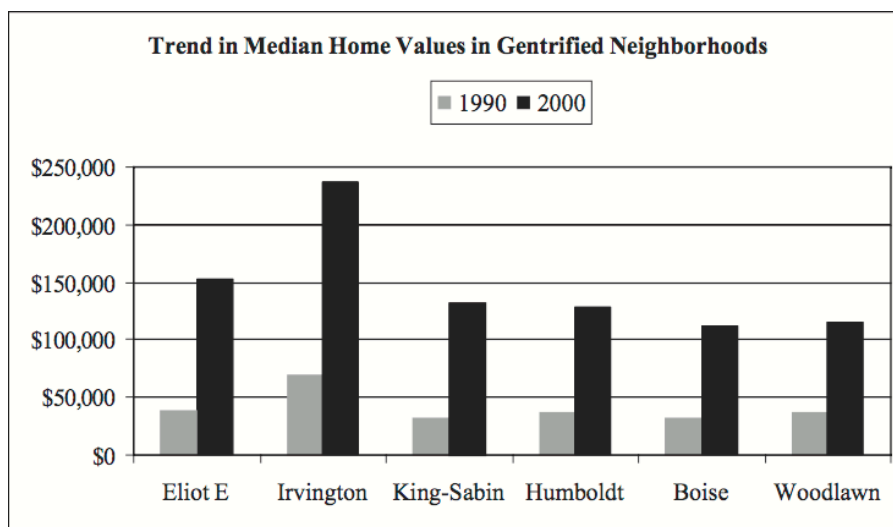


Table 9: Home values tripled and sometimes quadrupled during the 1990s (Gibson 2016 p. 20)

In 2000, the Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area (ICURA) of Portland, Oregon was established by the Portland City Council, and Managed by the Portland Development Commission. Funding for the ICURA comes from Tax Increment Financing or TIFs which pay for the capital improvement projects in North/Northeast Portland (Boyle 2008). The ICURA applied \$30 million towards the construction of the Yellow Line. This made the Yellow Line the only light rail system in funded by an urban renewal program (Boyle 2008). The ICURA targeting Albina for urban renewal is ironic

and telling because one of its goals is to raise property values, yet the community in focus was already actively experiencing gentrification. As I mentioned earlier, Slater explains how government agencies (in this case, the PDC) utilize other terms to mask gentrification. The ICURA is an example of that.

The PDC failed to adequately measure the potential of gentrification and displacement when creating the ICURA boundaries. The boundaries of the ICURA and Albina do not align exactly, however, Albina fits within the boundaries. There was a commitment drafted to analyze these factors, but at a later date, well after the boundaries of the ICURA were formed (Boyle 2008). The study that was actually conducted was inaccurate in its results because the data used was created before the creation of an urban renewal area and did not apply to the changes that had happened after the boundaries were completed. Boyle writes “The 2002 Economic Revitalization & Involuntary Displacement study represents the only real investigation into the issue, and is largely based on data collected before the creation of an urban renewal area. As a result, we have no way to measure progress towards a central principle of the Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area Plan” (Boyle 2008 p. 13).

I present all of this to show how Albina has experienced a consistent cycle of gentrification and displacement for decades that resulted in part from public investment in physical infrastructure in Portland. Albina was once a predominantly Black community that had been severely under invested in and then primed for reinvestment from private developers. These developers were incentivized by the PDC and the FHA to invest in the ICURA. I gather the FHA had an interest in investing due to the previous

history of how Black families had been denied mortgages. The case of Albina also shows why it is important to thoroughly monitor for gentrification and displacement in areas slated for reinvestment, specifically with accurate data. Albina is important because it is an example of how advanced the issue of gentrification and displacement can become for Langley Park if accurate data is not utilized to measure impacts, among other strategies. Albina also shows Langley Park that inclusive planning processes require giving decision making power to the residents of a community during the planning process.

## **Chapter 4: Methodology**

### **Gentrification Susceptibility Tool Kit**

Statistical data for demographics that were used to conduct the gentrification susceptibility toolkit analysis was gathered using the United States decennial census as well as the American Community Survey (ACS). Social Explorer was the information database source utilized in finding this information. In order to identify which census tracts corresponded with the neighborhoods within the Albina District, Rainier Valley, and Langley Park, I utilized google maps as a tool to locate the area. Once the area and its boundaries had been identified, a Google search of maps showcasing census tracts for each of the communities was conducted in order to cross reference the google maps with those census tracts. As a process of familiarizing myself with the case study of Langley Park, I made a field visit to the community. While in Langley Park, I located the planned transit stops for the Purple Line, and walked the area to understand what the surroundings were like first hand. While conducting my field visit, I documented my analysis by taking photographs that can be found in Appendix A and B.

Once the data from the case studies was gathered, used the Susceptibility Tool Kit (STK) developed by Karen Chapple for analysis of the Bay Area in California. Chapple developed the toolkit to serve as a tool for analyzing how vulnerable and susceptible a community was to gentrification. I applied the STK to the census tracts that make up Langley Park to examine the potential that gentrification could be accelerated by light rail in a community that has not yet had light rail implemented yet. Table 7 shows the STK and my results.

Variable Type	Variable	Direction	Point
<b>Transportation</b>	% of Workers Taking Transit	Positive	1
<b>Amenities</b>	Youth Facilities	Positive	1
	Public Space	Positive	1
	Small Parks	Positive	1
<b>Demographic</b>	% non-family households	Positive	0
<b>Housing</b>	% of dwelling units in buildings w/ 5+	Positive	1
	% of dwelling units in buildings w/ 3-4 units	Positive	1
	% renter-occupied	Positive	1
	Public Housing Units	Positive	N/A
<b>Income</b>	Income Diversity	Positive	1
	% of renters paying > 30% of income	Positive	0
<b>Location</b>		Positive	N/A
<b>Transportation</b>	% of dwelling units with 3+ cars	Negative	1
<b>Amenities</b>	Rec Facilities per 1,000	Negative	
<b>Demographic</b>	% married couples w/ children	Negative	1
	% non-Hispanic white	Negative	1
<b>Housing</b>	Median gross rent	Negative	1
<b>Income</b>	% of owners paying > 30% of income	Negative	1
<b>Location</b>		Negative	N/A
<b>Total Points</b>			13
<b>Level of Susceptibility</b>	High (16+), Moderate (13-15), Low (12 and Below)		<b>Moderate</b>

Table 10: Langley Park, Maryland Susceptibility Tool Kit

The STK was utilized by first looking at the averages returned for each indicator variable the census tracts. I looked to see if the yield came out to be above or below the averages of the same indicator for the county as a whole. The comparison of tract to county shows whether or not the demographics are experiencing a substantial change different than that of the county. An example is that if the % of non-Hispanic white people in the population is below the average of that of the county, that variable gets a point. “Since tracts with a below average share of non-Hispanic whites are more likely to gentrify, this neighborhood scores 1 on the factor; likewise, since tracts with above

average rent-burdened households are more likely to gentrify, this neighborhood also scores a 1 on the rent burden factor” (Chapple 2009 p. 7). The total from all nineteen of the factors is the how I calculate the susceptibility index. Scores of 16 or more factors consider a community highly susceptible to gentrification. Scores of 13-15 are moderate susceptibility index and 12 or below make for a low susceptibility index. Lastly, the positive and negative values in the direction column of the STK denote whether or not a particular difference in variable averages is a positive or negative indicator. Essentially this controls if a point is warranted or not. Positive means that a factor being above average is more likely to be a gentrifying and negative means that a factor being above average is less likely to be a gentrifying factor.

## **Results**

Once the STK was completed, the points from each factor were totaled into a sum to estimate how susceptible Langley Park, Maryland is to gentrification. Langley Park’s total points yielded a susceptibility index of 13, meaning that there is a moderate level of susceptibility to gentrification. Light rail impacts property taxes and property values of neighboring communities by causing them to rise due to the economic development that follows light rail implementation. With this being said, I believe it is plausible that the Purple Line rail will accelerate the process of gentrification that could lead to the displacement of community residents. This is vital information for the residents of Langley Park and its community leaders. The planners overseeing the planning process will find these results useful as well.



## **Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion**

The STK shows that if there is not a substantial amount of conscious and inclusive planning that takes place, major equity issues could arise. Conscious and inclusive planning involves heavy community engagement and giving more power to the current residents. It also involves focusing on preserving the already present communities so that the development that follows transit stations does not negatively impact the cost of living of those community members. Strategies of conscious planning include: requiring businesses that move into the community to reserve a certain percentage of employee positions for current residents of the community, performing regular community climate monitoring practices to ensure current residents are not struggling to keep up with the changes in the community, or even including a ceiling for taxes raising on owned property so that landlords renting out units are not forced to transfer the burden to their tenants. Equity issues following the implementation of light rail could show up in the form of a decrease in the affordable housing stock. Affordable housing stock could suffer due to land lords or property owners selling land that multifamily structures currently occupy to developers who do not practice community engagement or inclusion in the planning process. They have a goal of maximizing return on investment and that can be at the expense of the current community residents. Those developers may have plans to demolish the homes of current renters who's housing occupies the land neighboring the transit stops. The rental cost of living could increase due to landlords needing to make up for an increase in property taxes.

An increase in rent could lead to families not being able to afford the housing they have depended on for years and be forced to find more affordable housing elsewhere. Once vacancies pile up and the landlord can no longer maintain the property, it is likely they will try to sell and once it is sold, it is at risk for demolition. The demolition could then open the opportunity for developers to come in and build luxury housing that then reduces the affordable rental housing stock available for families in the area.

### **Limitations**

While conducting my analysis, I did experience a few issues that I will call limitations. One of the first limitations I experienced was the lack of explanation in Chapple's STK analysis. In her analysis there were two neighboring control cities where proximity of the variable city to one or the other could translate to being either a positive or negative yield. The issue was that I was unable to decipher upon what pretenses those control cities were chosen. As a result, I was unable to include a clear assessment using two control cities that neighbored Langley Park the variable city in this case. Despite not being able to conclude if these factors garnered points or not, it was still possible to calculate a moderate level index score. I believe this is still helpful in the sense that it will provide evidence for the necessity of a level of concern for the future of Langley Park once the Purple Line is operational.

A second limitation I experienced was inconsistent census tract numbering. After analyzing the tracts using geographic information systems in order to gain a visual of the district, the list seemed incomplete when cross-referenced with the GIS data. To remedy this, I used a hybrid list of census tracts in order to capture more more information. The

issue with this was that ACS and Census data did not always provide me with the exact census tracts because of realignment of tracts that happens as time progresses. For example, a census tract from the year 2000 had since been divided into two or vice versa by the year 2010 it had seemed. So then I revisited the data and decide to only use the tracts presented in Table 3 to reduce inconsistencies.

### **Recommendations for Planners**

There is a myriad of steps that need to be taken in order to make sure that future planning of light rail in communities is inclusive of the current residents of communities in the planning process. Recommended practices suggested by the Puget Sound Sage for Rainier Valley could be applicable towards Langley Park. I believe the recommendations Greenwich writes about will be effective in assisting Langley Park in combating gentrification that could follow the implementation of the Purple Line. The recommended practices are as follows:

- Create a tax increment tool that generates revenue for low-income housing near transit stations.
- Preserve existing, privately-owned multifamily buildings that serve low-income families.
- Maximize creation of local, high-quality jobs in transit projects in Langley Park – including both short-term construction jobs and long-term, on site jobs.
- Connect low-income workers of color in Rainier Valley to high quality jobs throughout the corridor.

- Ensure affordable childcare near transit stations to increase job security for working parents.
- Encourage family-sized units (2+ bedrooms) in market-based housing policy.
- Encourage development of units to households making 30% to 60% of area median income (AMI) to provide housing for low-wage workers.
- Support and promote community-controlled development as a primary strategy to stabilize Rainier Valley residents.
- Include communities of color who are stakeholders in transit investment planning and policy to be part of decision-making in order to achieve racial equity outcomes.
- Local Governments and elected officials should support and promote the use of stakeholder-led agreements with developers, such as Community Benefits Agreements and Community Workforce Agreements. (Greenwich 2016 p. vii)

### **A Bigger Picture**

In addition to recommending these concrete steps for urban planners and policymakers, this report also suggests that a larger and far reaching effort is needed to undo the lasting damage done by racist policies and housing discrimination. Often times, planners and policymakers advocate subsidies instead of remedies. An example of this is in the many ways that housing and income is subsidized for low-income Black people; such subsidies help some Blacks simply to function in this economic system but not to advance.

A more effective and lasting approach to shielding vulnerable communities from gentrification may be to take steps to catch up the economically disadvantaged. According to a report by the Institute for Policy Studies, it would take the average Black family “228 years to accumulate as much wealth as their white counterparts hold today.” Essentially, for Black families to catch up, white families would have to stop growing economically and it would take 228 years to catch up if Black families kept the current rate of increase. Keep in mind, 228 years is only “17 years shorter than the 245-year span of [chattel] slavery in this country” (Asante-Muhammed et. al. 2016 p. 5). This does not include the forms of economic disenfranchisement that have hindered Black families from accumulating wealth, including the discriminatory housing and lending policies discussed in this report. *Figure 4* showcases a timeline of where chattel slavery began, when it ended, the Jim Crow era, today and the time it would take to catch up with white families of 2013 alone.

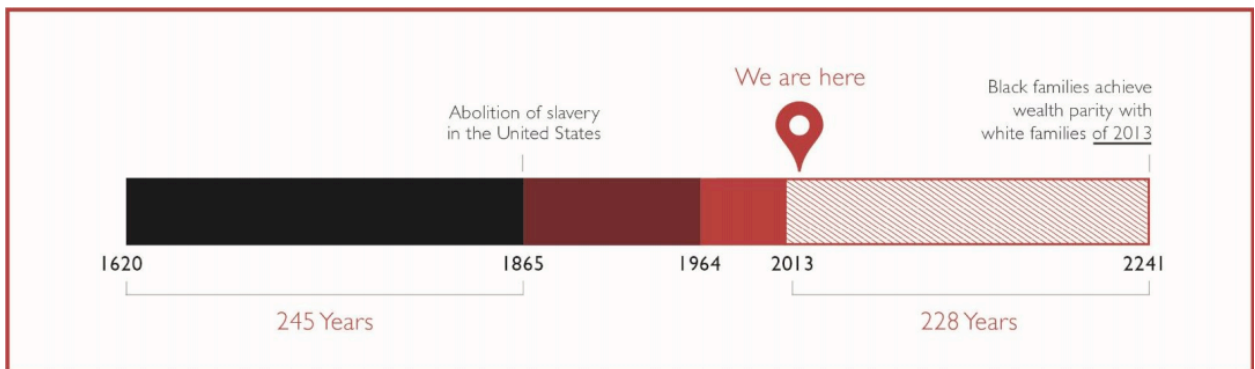


Figure 4: The timeline from slavery to wealth parity with white of the past (Asante-Muhammed et. al. 2016 p. 11)

I believe that there are two fronts on which these equity issues can be attacked. The first front is taking care of the root of the problem that is the uneven accessibility to resources and economic capital and racial discrimination. The Black families in Albina experienced this first hand as they were barred from acquiring home loans that would have allowed them to develop generational wealth through property ownership. The practice of distributing reparations is necessary to achieve this goal. Black and minority families were cheated out of the opportunity to own homes and property and are now behind in comparison to white families. The second is smart planning that is efficient and effective in giving people access who need it the most and not subsidizing those who don't. That is the difference between planning for equality and equity. Planning for equality will give everyone the same benefits and the results will be the same, but planning for equity will support those with need so that they may have the same quality of life as those who share they share the community with.

### **Reparations and white Supremacy**

As the literature review and Albina case study may suggest, Black Americans have been disproportionately discriminated against via racist housing policies as well as predatory lending practices. These housing industry practices and policies are representative of how white supremacy has manipulated Black and Brown communities through disinvestment, gentrification, and displacement process in order to acquire more capital within the nation.

Undoing the damage done by white supremacy and successfully planning for a fair and accessible transit calls for creating equity. Equity is more important than

equality. For example, giving everyone the ability to live a ¼ mile from a transit station sounds great but isn't very helpful if those stations do not give access to necessary resources for equitable living. These resources would be things such as access to fresh produce, physicians' offices, quality education, jobs that pay above minimum wage, etc. One way to ensure that future plans will serve the community fairly is to make sure that everyone is on a level economic playing field. Leveling the field should be done by distributing reparations to those severely disadvantaged (Black people) by the government's policies and white people's prejudice treatment. Talk of reparations is not new. Congressman John Conyers Jr, of Detroit, has introduced a bill "calling for a congressional study of slavery and its lingering effects as well as recommendations for 'appropriate remedies'" (Coates 2016 p 21). This bill is now formally called HR 40, the Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act. Unfortunately, this bill has never, under either political party rule, made it to the house floor.

Ta-Nehisi Coates, a journalist for *The Atlantic*, writes, "An America that looks away is ignoring not just the sins of the past but the sins of the present and the certain sins of the future" (Coates 2016 p. 57). This applies to the notion that if we continue to plan according to the status quo and ignoring the socioeconomic and structural inequities that exist within our country's policies, we will continue to disadvantage people the same as before. He continues, "the payment of reparations would represent America's maturation out of the childhood myth of its innocence into a wisdom worthy of its founders" (Coates 2016 p. 57). Reparations would be a helpful solution to the long history of housing discrimination in America that is once of the many causes for Black

families being disproportionately impacted by the racially charged practices targeting communities for disinvestment which can lead to a process of reinvestment, ultimately gentrifying the community and pricing out its original residents resulting in displacement.

## **Conclusion**

This study bridges the gap between research involving gentrification and light rail infrastructure's impact on property and land values. This bridge is necessary because it shows the uncommonly studied concept that light rail can become a contributor or accelerant to the process of gentrification, leading to displacement of low-income Black people and people of color. The approach taken for this report is an attempt to give an estimated measure of risk Langley Park is taking on with the construction of the MTA's new Purple Line stations at Riggs Road and the Takoma/Langley Transit Center. At the same time, this report shows how communities become vulnerable to gentrification and displacement. It also shows how historical context is paramount in comprehending why planners must make conscious efforts to ensure that communities that are predominantly Black or communities of color or low-income are not adversely impacted by public investments that could catalyze or accelerate gentrification. Making the distinction between Black people and non-Black people of color by not using Black instead of "people of color" is important due to the historical context of housing policies that intentionally discriminated against Black people and not all people of color or minorities. Though the oppressive policies written by the FHA targeted Black people specifically, non-Black people of color faced similar housing discrimination and should be protected as well. As a potential contribution to the study of transit and gentrification, this study is



meant to be seen as a tool to both educate public officials, advocates for minorities, community leaders, and residents of Langley Park.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Riggs Road, Langley Park, MD



Figure 5: Shopping center located behind proposed Riggs Rd Purple Line stop



Figure 6: Business park diagonal from proposed Riggs Rd station



Figure 7: Current retail near proposed Riggs Rd Purple Line stop





Figure 8: Existing bus stop located near proposed Riggs Rd Purple Line stop



Figure 9: Fire station near proposed Riggs Rd Purple Line Station





Figure 10: Multi-family housing near proposed Riggs Rd Purple Line station



Figure 11: Multi-family housing near proposed Riggs Rd Purple Line station





Figure 12: Busy intersection neighboring proposed Riggs Rd Purple Line station





Figure 13: Existing bus stop proposed Riggs Rd Purple Line station is supposed to replace



Figure 14: Bus stop sign denoting existing bus routes at the proposed location of the Riggs Rd station



Figure 15: Neighboring shopping center denoting how the Latinx community is accommodated by using Spanish



## Appendix B: Takoma/Langley Transit Center, Langley Park, MD



Figure 16: Existing transit center where proposed Takoma Station will be located



Figure 17: Welcome sign to Takoma and Langley border



Figure 18: Parked bikes at Takoma Transit Center





Figure 19: Takoma Transit Center



Figure 20: Multi-family housing near Takoma Transit Center





Figure 21: Local school walking distance from Takoma Transit Center



Figure 22: Local school walking distance from Takoma Transit Center



Figure 23: Local bus stop advertisement in Spanish denoting the how the community accommodates Latinx people

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